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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Is Bread Enrichment Here to Stay?" ... Information from the Office of Marketing Services, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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How often do you read the label on a loaf of bread? Probably not very often ...if you're an average homemaker.

However, two years ago you may have looked at the wrapper on your bread with actual curiosity. In large letters the word "enriched", announced to you that your baker had complied with the new law...although the bread looked the same and tasted the same as it did before.

On October 1, 1943, every loaf of white bread and every pan of plain rolls... made by a baker...was required by Federal law...to contain additional iron and more niacin, thiamin and riboflavin. This was called the enrichment process.

The millers who wished to do so, could also enrich their white flour in similar proportions. But they were not required by law to do so. At present, about 75 percent of the white flour on the market is enriched.

Before the war, a survey made by nutritionists indicated that only about one-fourth of the 29 million families not on relief in America...were eating food which provided diets that could be called good. More than one-third of the diets were classified as poor.

Most families must depend on inexpensive foods. This means including in the diet relatively large amounts of flour and bread. Most people eat white flour and white bread because they definitely prefer it to whole wheat. Records show that 97 percent of the flour milled in the United States is white flour. So it's easy to see that the enrichment of white flour and white bread supplies to millions of people...some of the important nutrients their diets lack.

(More)

According to nutritionists who recommended the additional of these B vitamins and iron...the wartime measure has proved worthwhile. This is what the National Research Council says..."the enrichment of flour and bread represents a major improvement in the American diet and is a sound, practical and inexpensive method for the achievement of better national nutrition. Such a goal is most certainly to be prized in peacetime as well as in wartime."

In view of these recommendations...by outstanding doctors and scientists...bread and flour enrichment is worth continuing. Most of the millers and bakers also, approve of the addition of these nutrients. The cost to the baker is very small...probably does not exceed 20 cents a person annually.

So the retail price of bread has not been affected by the enrichment process. Enriched flour is a few cents higher...but certainly worth the extra pennies.

By now, you're probably so accustomed to seeing that word "enriched" on your bread wrapper that you take it for granted. But it's wise to remember that the Federal enrichment measure is a piece of wartime legislation which may be cancelled soon.

Both Federal and state legislation is favored by many supporters of the enrichment program. So if you want your bread and flour permanently enriched let your grocer and your baker know that you appreciate and want this extra service.

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